

France Warden Message – March 30, 2009

This Warden Message alerts U.S. citizens in France to the upcoming North Atlantic Treaty Alliance Summit in Strasbourg, France and Baden-Baden and Kehl, Germany on April 3 and 4, 2009. As a result of the Summit, there will be interruptions in transportation routes and a high possibility of large and disruptive protests. Hotel accommodations will be difficult if not impossible to secure.

The 60th NATO Heads of Government Summit and summit-related activities will take place in Strasbourg, France as well as Baden-Baden and Kehl, Germany on April 3 and 4, 2009. Heads of government, foreign ministers, and corresponding delegations representing 26 NATO member states and 24 Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council states with over 3,500 foreign government officials and 3,000 journalists will be in attendance.

Travelers in the region should anticipate significantly enhanced security measures, including the restoration of border controls and associated passport checks between Germany and France from now until at least April 5th. Major traffic delays are expected. Moreover, there may be large, disruptive demonstrations in which activists seek to target the NATO venues and/or the routes traveled by VIPs attending the events. This may result in road blocks on major thoroughfares throughout the region. Consequently, all travelers planning to transit the region should give serious consideration to using alternate routes and non-essential travel to Strasbourg, Baden-Baden, and Kehl should be deferred until after the summit.

Numerous anti-NATO, anti-globalization, anti-military activist groups have announced their intentions to hold demonstrations during the week leading up to the summit and continuing on for several days after it ends. In the Strasbourg area alone, up to 15,000 protesters are expected. The areas surrounding Baden-Baden and Kehl may also be similarly affected, albeit with smaller groups of protestors. We remind American citizens that even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and possibly escalate into violence, particularly when such large numbers of protestors are expected. During similar events previously held in the region, some large demonstrations turned violent when demonstrators deliberately clashed with security authorities. American citizens are therefore urged to avoid demonstrations and to exercise extreme caution if within the vicinity of one. American citizens should stay current with media coverage of local events and be aware of their surroundings at all times.

U.S. citizens in France are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's travel registration web site, <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within France. Americans without internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consular Section (please see contact information below). By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet website at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Travel Alerts, Travel Warnings, Worldwide Caution, and Country Specific Information for France can be found. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

U.S. Consular Sections in France are located in:

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Registering with the U.S. Embassy

The cornerstone of our efforts to keep the American traveling public aware of problems threatening their safety and security is our Consular Information Program. Travel registration is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. Americans residing abroad can also get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. You may register online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>.

Country Specific Information is available for every country of the world. These pages include such information as location of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. We strongly encourage visitors and persons residing in France to refer to the U.S. Department of State Country Specific Information Sheet for France and Monaco at the following webpage:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1116.html.